

## The Vision of the Cross

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us that Constantine offered up a prayer to this god of his father, beseeching him," to declare himself who he was," and to stretch forth his right hand to help. "To declare himself who he was!"\* (*(pijvai avrcp eavrov offris efif)*). That had ever been the stumbling-block in the way of the acceptance by the masses of the immaterial principles propounded by the philosophers. Constantine must have a god with a name, and he must have a sign from heaven in visible proof. Many have asked for such a sign just as importunately (*hi7tapco\$ iHersvovri*) as Constantine, but without success. To him it was vouchsafed.

The answer came one afternoon, when the sun had just passed its zenith and was beginning to decline. Lifting his eyes, the Emperor saw in the heavens just above the sun the figure of a cross, a cross of radiant light, and attached to it was the inscription, " Conquer by This " (*rovrc\*) rzna*). Eusebius admits that if any one else had told the story it would not have been easy to believe it, but it was told to him by the Emperor himself, who had confirmed his words with a royal oath. How then was it possible to doubt ? Constantine was awe-struck at the vision, which Eusebius expressly declares was seen also by the entire army. All that afternoon the Emperor pondered long upon the significance of the words, and night fell while he was still asking himself what they could mean. Then, as he slept, Christ appeared to him in a dream, bearing with Him the sign that had flamed in the sky, and bade the sleeper make a copy of it and use it as a talis\*